

The Oak-Tree Group of Schools

Mental Health and Wellbeing during Coronavirus:

A Guide for Parents
and Carers



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Mental Health and Wellbeing During Coronavirus

It is becoming clear that COVID-19 and the measures being taken to control its spread are having a negative impact on the mental health and emotional wellbeing of many people, including parents and children.

We have produced this booklet to provide some support for parents as you navigate this challenging time with your families. The hope is that it provides a directory of useful places you can go to access support, or to find out more about how to stay mentally and emotionally healthy through this period.

Some of the sites have online opportunities to complete a 'wellbeing check', or provide resources for children to use to help them find ways to talk about how they are feeling. The hope is that parents will find this range of websites useful at home.

For older children and teenagers, there are opportunities to think about mental health and wellbeing for themselves, and for parents to look at the websites as well as their children.



Emotional Wellbeing Through Coronavirus

There are many places to go for help and information about emotional wellbeing.

Public Health England Coronavirus resources:

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/101-coronavirus-resources>

Advice for children and families:

<https://www.annafreud.org/coronavirus/>

Mental health foundation - How to look after your mental health during the Coronavirus outbreak:

<https://mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus>

Guidance for the public on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of coronavirus (COVID-19):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19>

New advice to support mental health during coronavirus outbreak: People struggling with their mental health during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak will be offered additional online support and practical guidance to help them cope by Gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-advice-to-support-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

Mind, Coronavirus and your wellbeing:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

6 ways parents can support their children through Coronavirus (Unicef):
<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/6-ways-parents-can-support-their-kids-through-coronavirus-covid-19>

Young minds; advice to young people and parent on mental health and impact of Coronavirus:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/youngminds-publishes-advice-for-young-people-and-parents-on-mental-health-impact-of-coronavirus/>

Young minds; what to do if you are anxious about Coronavirus:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/>

King's College London's Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and Maudsley Charity have launched a series of eight short films to help families struggling under the Coronavirus pandemic. The Families Under Pressure series offers parenting tips and advice:

<https://maudsleycharity.org/whats-on/news/kings-college-london-nhs-maudsley-hospital-and-maudsley-charity-launch-families-under-pressure/>

A website to support parents and carers concerned about the mental health of their children or teenagers. It has information and advice to help you support your children and look after yourself:

<https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/>



This is an NHS website that focuses on helping people look after their mental health. It has a section that relates to Coronavirus and it has sections for adults, parents and also for teenagers:

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

This guidance is aimed for parents and carers of children and young people:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

This Barnardos website is specifically for Coronavirus and includes a range of resources, tool, videos and more focusing on yours and your family's emotional wellbeing:

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/support-hub/emotional-wellbeing>

Helping Children and Young Adults Cope with Bereavement

The following websites are helpful for children who are grieving the loss of a loved one.



Child Bereavement UK

This is a well-established charity working to provide support for children who are bereaved. It has an area focused on Coronavirus:

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/pages/category/coronavirus>

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>



Childhood Bereavement Network

This site is specifically focused on support during Coronavirus.

<http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/covid-19.aspx> -



The Good Grief Trust

Practical help and tips which may help you if you are newly bereaved under any circumstance, including a UK map to find your nearest support organisation:

<https://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org/>



Emotional Wellbeing in Self-isolation for Children, Young People and Parents

Top tips for staying emotionally healthy during self-isolation:



Stick to a active daily routine

(e.g. creating your own daily programme including three meals a day, activity time slots, self-care opportunities and bedtime routine)



Do light activity - stretch and home workouts

(e.g. yoga, dance, spring cleaning the house)



Keep up hobbies that keep you moving

(e.g. baking, reading, writing, making music, gardening etc)



Keep connected to others

(e.g. phones, email, skype, websites, helplines & online counselling)

Engage in creative activities

(e.g. art, scrap book making, junk modelling, restoring furniture, create music, redecorating)



Keep an active mind

(e.g. learning a new skill, research, brain training games, home learning using such free websites)

Try meditation and relaxation

(e.g. Apps and free YouTube videos such as headspace)

Hot desk at home with planned short brain breaks

(Try to work in the same place every day and pack away when done.)

Plan meals in advance

Do things you enjoy doing

(e.g. watch a boxset, paint your nails, listen to podcasts, reading etc)

Keeping hydrated

Take time for Self-care

(Self-care is any activity that we do deliberately in order to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health. Although it's a simple concept in theory, it's something we very often overlook. Good self-care is key to improved mood and reduced anxiety)



Supporting Yourself and Your Family

How to support your mental health whilst working from home by Mental Health First Aid England: <https://mhfaengland.org/>

For your mind health get 'your mind plan' quiz, get 'your physical health quiz', plus NHS endorsed Apps: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/your-mind-plan-quiz/>

Mental health explained by the organisation Mind: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/mental-health-problems-introduction/support-services/>

The app by Action for Happiness is like having a little personal action coach in your pocket who gives you friendly 'nudges' with an action idea each day, sends you inspiring messages to give you a boost and helps you connect & share ideas with like-minded people: <https://www.actionforhappiness.org/app>

The Wilderness Foundation provide resources and activities to keep you focussed, active and entertained. Keeping you and your family physically and mentally healthy:

<https://wildernessfoundation.org.uk/wildtime/>

Time to Change website & signposting to other websites: <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/mental-health-and-stigma/help-and-support>

How to support someone experiencing mental health difficulties by the Mental Health Foundation: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/supporting-someone-mental-health-problem>

Helping your friends and family 12 things to try when a loved one is struggling by Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH): https://www.samh.org.uk/documents/looking_after_friends_and_family_factsheet.pdf

16+ self-help CBT online course by Moodgym (advocated from SAMHs document above): <https://moodgym.com.au/info/fag>

Course for learning and practicing mindfulness by Be Mindful Online (the course carries a £30 cost): <https://www.bemindfulonline.com/>

Supporting Children and Young People

Supporting children and young people's mental health advice: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/>

NSPCC; Mental health and parenting:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/mental-health-parenting/>

Kids Inspire: <https://kidsinspire.org.uk/virtual-childrens-mental-health-therapy-for-those-most-in-need/> The service remains open and the team are continuing to support families right across the county. If you need to speak with one of the team, you can still do so on one of the phone numbers. A member of the team will be available Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.

The link below is to an article about getting through lockdown with teenagers:

<https://weneedtotalkaboutchildrensmentalhealth.wordpress.com/2020/03/29/2and-getting-through-lockdown-together-with-teenagers/>

Parental mental health: How to help children living with parents with mental health problems by NSPCC: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/child-protection-system/parental-mental-health/>

Parenting with mental health challenges by Mind: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/parenting-with-a-mental-health-problem/parenting-and-mental-health/>

Young Minds for parents: <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help-for-parents/>

Parenting with mental health illness by Young Minds: <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help-for-parents/parents-guide-to-support-a-z/parents-guide-to-support-parental-mental-illness/>

Activities for families whilst in self-isolation by Home Start: <https://www.home-start.org.uk/news/activities-for-families-during-self-isolation>

NHS mental wellbeing audio guides: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/moodzone-mental-wellbeing-audio-guides/>

Mental Health Foundation Podcasts: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/podcasts-and-videos/podcasts-for-your-wellbeing>

Good days and bad days during lockdown by Beyond Words. This is a short wordless booklet with scenes from existing Beyond Words stories looking at what makes a 'good day' and what makes a 'bad day'. Scenes address social distancing, lockdown, mental health and daily routines: <https://booksbeyondwords.co.uk/downloads-shop>



New Support for Families Living in Essex

Over the summer, Essex launched a new range of services to give young people and their families a little extra help during the coronavirus pandemic.

Family Innovation Fund-Xtra services are provided by the voluntary sector and community partners and provide early support across key areas including understanding coronavirus; managing and coping with change; separation and loss; managing and coping with anxiety; healthy family relationships and staying active and curious.

The services are available to children and young people aged between 0 and 19 years (up to 25 years for young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities) and are aimed at helping young people and families who are not already receiving specialist or statutory support.

They can be accessed directly by families, through referral from a professional such as a teacher, via the Getting Help in Essex Directory, or by calling one of the organisations themselves.

To receive support via the Family Innovation Fund-Xtra service, young people and their families can contact one of the organisations listed below, depending on their needs.

Wilderness Foundation

Offers counselling and therapeutic support, and may bring nature, art and other creative tools into sessions. Appointments are available 9am-5pm Monday - Friday. Evenings and weekends by appointment.
Contact 0300 1233073 or info@wildernessfoundation.org.uk

Renew Counselling

An experienced and accredited counselling service for all ages. Appointments are available Monday – Friday 10am – 5pm and Monday-Thursday 5pm-8pm. Saturdays by appointment.
Contact 01245 359353 or hilary@renew-us.org

Open Door

Offers coaching, counselling and mediation. Appointments are available Monday to Thursday 9am to 7pm, Friday 9am to 5pm. Saturday and Sunday by appointment.

Contact 01375 390040 or Fifxtra@opendoorservices.org

Relate

Offer accredited mediation and counselling. Appointments are available 9am to 9pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm on Saturdays.

Contact 01245 676930 or 01708 441722 or enquiries@relatenee.org.uk

YMCA

Can help families identify beneficial strategies and solutions for their needs in individual, group or family sessions. Appointments are available Monday to Friday and Saturdays by agreement.

Contact 01245 355677 or sarah.daniels@ymcachelmsford.org.uk

Evolve Intervention

Provide early intervention for children and young people through mentoring, coaching, group work and tuition. Appointments are available Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm, with some availability between 6pm to 8pm and on Saturdays 10am to 4pm.

Contact us on 01245 526069 or info@evolve-intervention.com.



Encouraging your Child, or Someone in Your Family, to Talk About Their Feelings



Talking Tips



Keep the chat positive and supportive, exploring the issues and how you may be able to help.



Keep your body language open and non-confrontational.



Be empathetic and take them seriously.



Do not offer glib advice such as “pull yourself together” or “cheer up”.



Take into account cultural differences in communication styles e.g how much eye contact is appropriate.



Useful Questions to Ask

How are you feeling at the moment?

Who do you feel you can go to for support?

Is there anything we can do to help?

How long have you felt like this - is it an ongoing issue?

Are there any work related factors which are contributing to how you are feeling?

